



Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

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AGENDA DATE: May 2, 2007

TO: Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

FROM: Kathy Frye, Natural Areas Planner, City of Santa Barbara
Kerry Kellogg, Recreation Specialist, Los Padres National Forest

SUBJECT: Existing Conditions – User Education - Signage, Informational Materials, Bike Bells, Trail Hosts – For Action

RECOMMENDATION: That the FCT Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force (Task Force):

- A. Receive a presentation on trail user education including trail signage, informational materials, bike bells, and trail hosts; and
- B. Recommend that FCT Task Force staff work with trail user groups to develop informational signage for installation at the trailheads of five front country trails.

DISCUSSION:

Introduction

The purpose of this staff report is to review existing trail user education programs, and to recommend that the Task Force move forward with the installation of trail head signs that encourage all trail users to share the trails in a courteous and safe manner. Trail head signs could also include information about the Task Force, volunteer trail maintenance opportunities, and the protection of environmental resources.

This staff report provides background on trail user education efforts of the Los Padres National Forest (LPNF), City of Santa Barbara, County of Santa Barbara, Los Padres Forest Association (LPFA), the Montecito Trails Foundation (MTF), Santa Barbara Trails Council, Trails Alliance, and Santa Barbara Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers (SBMTV).

Trail user education through signage and informational materials has existed for many years. When hikers and equestrians began sharing trails with mountain bikers during the mid-1980s, it became apparent that trail user education also needed to focus on reducing trail use conflicts. The Santa Barbara Ranger District (SBRD) periodically called community meetings to discuss trail user conflicts and trail user education was a top recommendation of those discussions. In addition to the SBRD, several groups have

been involved with trail use education, including the LPFA, MTF, Santa Barbara Trails Council, Trails Alliance, and SBMTV, among others.

The following discussion focuses on four main categories, including:

- Signage
- Informational Materials
- Bike Bells
- Trail Hosts

Please note that this information was compiled in a short period of time and is not considered comprehensive. It is anticipated that the Task Force may learn of additional user education efforts during the various user group presentations.

1. Trail Signs

Over the last 30 or more years, trail signage has been designed and installed by the USFS, City of Santa Barbara, County of Santa Barbara, LPFA, MTF, SBMTV, and the Trails Alliance. Sign examples are provided in Attachment 1.

USFS Signs: The USFS placed signs at the top and bottom of the FCTs, regardless of jurisdiction, approximately 20 years ago. Signs that are still in place may be in good condition or in need of repair. USFS signs include trail identification, direction and mileage indicators at trail heads or trail intersections. Other USFS signs include bird house or bulletin board signs located at trail heads. These signs may include a map or inform the user of fire danger, ask the user not to pollute, to stay on the trail, or provide regulation or warning information. Other information may include educational material, such as cultural or biological resources literature. Trail sign composition includes redwood, routed wood, fiberglass (Glasstex) and metal. As an example, a bulletin board sign with informational material is located at the trailhead of Snyder Trail. In general, the USFS does not include informational signage along trails, although there are trail markers and direction signs.

City of Santa Barbara Signs: The City has a few signs associated with the FCTs. As an example, there is a routed wooden sign in Skofield Park at the trailhead of Rattlesnake Canyon. A dog waste sign is also included at this location. The Parma Park entrance along Stanwood Drive includes a wood sign identifying the park and a mutt mitt station at the entrance. Small wood trail marker signs can be found on the trails within Parma Park.

County of Santa Barbara Signs: The County identifies trails with a white and blue County emblem on a narrow brown paddle post. The MTF is responsible for most of the signage that is posted on County urban trails.

Montecito Trails Foundation Signs: The Montecito Trail Association (predecessor of MTF) installed metal signs with metal posts beginning in 1956. MTF provides signs that are located in the First District of Santa Barbara County and within the Los Padres National Forest. Metal signs were replaced with wooden signs by the MTF in the 1970's, and since that time, the sign program has expanded. MTF posts the triangle "share the trail" yield symbol. The most recent MTF FCT sign program is in association with the Montecito Fire District (MFD). This 2005/2006 sign program included trail indicators associated with Global Positioning System (GPS) map locations. These indicators provide the MFD, and other public agencies, locations for emergency response and rescue. Summerland will likely be the next area where the MTF GPS marker signs will be installed.

LPFA and the MTF have a "bird house" sign approximately 18" x 24". This sign has a wood frame, generally includes a map, and may or may not include a lexan (clear polycarbonate) cover. Bird house signs are typically prepared by LPFA volunteers. This type of sign is located at the McMenemy Trail.

Santa Barbara Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers: Installation of the trail courtesy triangle began in 1993 by the Mountain Bike Trail Volunteers (MBTV; now SBMTV). The SBMTV triangle yield sign illustrates "Bikes yield to horses; Bikes yield to hikers; Hikers yield to horses." These signs are installed at the tops and bottoms of USFS trails. Triangle yield signs were prepared with funds and a logo from International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). The USFS reviewed and approved installation of the sign.

Trail Sign Considerations

Multiple Signs: Signs from more than one jurisdiction, with directions, literature or warning may be located at trailheads or along a trail. Although this can be confusing for a trail user, it often reflects the multiple messages of different public agencies or community trail groups. The following information provides example of locations with several sign types. The Tunnel Trail includes a County "No Parking" sign, a Mutt Mitt station, and a USFS Fire Danger sign on the gated entrance. Cold Springs Trail includes a MTF wooden trail marker and trail literature, a City Dog Waste sign, and USFS metal mileage sign. Cold Springs Trail also includes a US Fish and Wildlife fishing regulation sign. Seven signs are located at the San Ysidro trailhead including two versions of the "share the trail" sign: one on a USFS post; and one from the MTF on the fence. A redwood USFS trail marker and mileage sign, routed and installed in 1981, and a wooden sign from the San Ysidro Ranch is also at the San Ysidro trailhead. The Jesusita trail is another location with multiple jurisdictions and multiple signs.

Signs Available for Installation: A key outcome of the Trails Working Group, comprised of public agencies and trail user groups, was related to trail user education. The working group recommended the development of a trail signage and education program; and a volunteer "trail host" program. The TWG carried over into the establishment of the Trails Alliance (TA), and since that time, the TA has worked on FCT educational materials, such as a draft brochure and a proposal to the USFS for

signage. The sign structures are 2' x 3' bulletin board type informational signs. Designed for installation at the top of trails and at the lower trailheads, they are large enough for informational signs and/or maps. The sign structures have been approved by the USFS and would need approval by the City and the County.

In addition to the structures, there are 100 blank 11" x 14" aluminum signs available that would be attached to the sign. They are painted cream and are ready to be made into signs. The blank sign is suitable for silk screen, printed labels, or laminated seasonal signs. The message on the signs could include the "share the trail" yield sign, which is popular with several organizations involved with FCTs. SBMTV has had more than one version of the yield sign, including a proposed draft "share the trail" sign, suitable for all trail users. Specific information is provided on this sign for bicyclists, equestrians, and hikers. The TA has also prepared a draft "share the trail" sign with general information and TA and USFS logos. The SBMTV and MTF have existing "share the trail" signs with their respective logos or organizational information. Attachment 2 includes illustrations of signs that have been previously proposed.

2. Trails Informational Materials

Trail informational materials are available in paper format (books, brochures, and maps) as well as on the Internet. Informational materials and web sites have been developed by LPFA, MTF, SBMTV, Sierra Club, and the Trails Alliance. The Los Padres National Forest has a website with information about the Forest and maps. The City and County websites have information about the Task Force, its meeting schedule and its meeting materials.

Brochures and Maps

The table below provides a summary of FCT brochures and maps available from agencies and organizations. A copy of the USFS "A Mountain Bicycle Guide" and the MTF map are located in the Task Force Resources Manual binder. Attachment 3 has some additional information.

Brochures and Maps Providing Information Related to FCT

Organization	Brochure Type	Map	Other information
USFS, SBRD, LPNF	Mountain Bicycle Guide for SBRD	Brochure includes roads and trails available for mountain bicycle riding in SB backcountry	Special restrictions; sharing the land; Cyclist's Code of Ethics; Safety and Preparedness (1989)
National Forest Store (online)		Los Padres National Forest, South, Map	
LPFA	Hiking guides; CA Invasive	Los Padres National Forest,	Located at Supervisor's Office (Goleta); SBRD; and other Ranger

	Plant Council (CAL IPC) plant brochures	South, Map; Topographic maps	Districts outside of the FCT area
MTF	Membership	Map covering Tunnel to proposed Franklin trails; Narrow Strip Map	Trail segment summary, trailheads and etiquette; strip map includes San Ysidro, Wiman, Old Pueblo, McMenemy, Girard and Hot Springs trails
SBMTV	Etiquette card and flier; Bike bell flier		Etiquette card w/share the trail logo encouraging bikers to “Ride Responsibly”. Card and fliers provided at bike shops and handed out by volunteers

Raymond (Ray) Ford maintains a website with the Santa Barbara Outdoors Map (Ford, Gallipeau) which includes all of the Front County Trails (see web site below). Ray Ford also provides a wealth of information about FCTs in his book, *Santa Barbara Day Hikes* (2000). There are revisions and similar Ford books, starting in 1975 with *Day Hikes of the Santa Barbara Foothills*.

Internet/Website

The LPFA website provides the most comprehensive information on FCT and includes material and links specific to FCT <http://www.lpforest.org/>. The website includes a trails database, volunteer center, interpretation and education, outdoor activities sign up, grants, and links to other organizations. LPFA has proposed that this website be a hub or umbrella for FCT volunteer user groups.

The MTF website <http://montecitotrailsfoundation.org/> provides history of the organization, contacts, and membership information.

The Sierra Club, Los Padres Chapter, website provides information on Santa Barbara and Ventura County, including FCT <http://lospadres.sierraclub.org/index.html>. The website includes an outings calendar, resources links, and current and back issues of the newsletter, which may contain FCT issue.

The Trails Alliance at <http://www.sbtrails.org/Trails/> provides information on trail etiquette, local trails information, and volunteer opportunities. Information is geared to all users and to specific trail user groups.

The LPNF <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lospadres> includes information on FCT plants, animals, geology, special-status species, road closures and trail conditions, permits, programs, and publications. A LPNF maps can be found at the interactive website <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/forestvisitormaps/lospadres/index.php#north>

The City has a web page dedicated to FCT Task Force under government committees http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Government/Other_Committees/Front_Country_Trails_Task_Force/. That page provides links to monthly FCT agendas, minutes, and meeting schedule, the FCT roster, and a link to City TV for a broadcast schedule.

The County provides information on the Parks website for the FCT Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force <http://www.santabarbaraparks.org/>. The webpage provides links to the City website.

Ray Ford's <http://www.sb-outdoors.org/> has an interactive FCT map, providing information on FCTs and information on trail etiquette, hikes, and rides beyond.

Miscellaneous

Volunteer group meetings, classes, and trail walks or rides provide educational opportunities for FCTs. Some advertisements may be considered education, if just to inform people that Santa Barbara provides opportunities for trail enjoyment. Advertisement is in the form of bike tourism information, film, video, and the internet, with the last being covered here under websites.

Bike Bells/Presence on Trails and Trail Hosts

The SBMTV instituted a bike bell program in 2002, which provided bells for downhill mountain bicycle riders to announce their presence to other trail users. They continue their efforts today. Bike bells are located at the tops of four mountain trails, in some cases the bottoms, and can also be purchased at several bike shops in town. Boxes containing bike bells can be found at the upper trailheads of Tunnel, Cold Springs, San Ysidro, and Romero trails. SBMTV started a Trail Patrol in 1993 to educate downhill bike riders. SBMTV also started a trail host program in 2000, with greeters stationed at upper trailheads to provide user education. Attachment 4 has photos of the bike bell and trail host programs.

Recommendation – Move Forward with Informational Trail Head Signage

Since the sign structures have been developed, and there is a recognized need for improved signage on the FCTs, it is recommended that the Task Force move forward with the installation of trail head signs that encourage all trail users to share the trail in a courteous and safe manner. Trail head signs could also include information about the Task Force, volunteer trail maintenance opportunities, and the protection of environmental resources. This work effort would include coordination and communication with trail user groups. As shown in the table on the following page, there are five recommended trails for signage.

Recommended Sign Installation Locations

Trail Name	Agency Jurisdiction		
	USFS	City	County
Tunnel	X	X	
San Ysidro	X		X
Cold Springs	X		X
Romero	X		X
Rattlesnake		X	

Signs suitable for the above ten locations would primarily be the 2' x 3' informational sign, although other sign types may be suitable. All sign material, content, and placement would be subject to review and approval by jurisdictional agencies. Staff would first return to the Task Force with the recommended sign language.

Funding

Funding for signage is largely funded by non-profit and volunteer organizations including the LPFA, MTF, and the SBMTV. LPFA currently has funds to finalize the trail head signs with the Forest. Additional funds might be needed to install the trail head signs on City and County land. Since much of the work has been done to manufacture the signs, it is anticipated that there would not be a significant cost to complete and install the trail heads signs.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Trail Sign Examples
 2. Proposed Trail Signs and Hardware
 3. SBMTV Etiquette Card and Flier
 4. Bike Bell and Trail Host Program Photos

SUBMITTED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director, City of Santa Barbara